

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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R 100154Z NOV 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 222222

JOINT STATE/DOD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRN, BEXP, VE
SUBJ: INAUGURATION OF MAIQUETIA AIRPORT

REF: CARACAS 9347, 022147ZNOV73

1. DEPARTMENTS ACTIVELY EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF FAVOR-
ABLE RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATE USAF PARTICIPATION
IN AIRPORT INAUGURATION. AS YOU RECOGNIZE, SEVERAL KEY
FACTORS MUST BE CONSIDERED.

A. NAVY F-4 DEMONSTRATION, THE BLUE ANGELS, IS OUT
OF BUSINESS FOR REMAINDER OF YEAR. INsofar AS POSSIBLE,
THUNDERBIRDS ARE MEETING PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED CONUS BLUE
ANGEL APPEARANCES. CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE IS TO
PROHIBIT ANY FURTHER OVERSEAS APPEARANCES FOR EITHER TEAM.
THESE FACTORS COUPLED WITH LEAD TIME AND EXTENSIVE SUPPORT
REQUIREMENTS FOR THUNDERBIRDS, FUNDING RESTRICTIONS, AND
CURRENT AND PROJECTED FUEL SHORTAGE DICTATE NO APPEARANCE
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OF F-4 DEMONSTRATION AT MAIQUETIA INAUGURATION.

B. C-5A AIRLIFT CAPABILITY HAS BEEN USED EXTENSIVELY

TO SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST. CURRENT NATIONAL FUEL SHORTAGE SERIOUSLY COMPLICATES THIS PROBLEM. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OF 7 NOVEMBER ADDRESSING MEASURES NECESSARY TO CONSERVE FUEL AND DRASTIC REDUCTION MISSIONS OF VARIOUS KINDS BRING PROBLEM INTO SHARP FOCUS. IN THIS REGARD, AIR FORCE AVIATION FUEL FOR CURRENT QUARTER HAS

BEEN REDUCED BY ONE-THIRD, EFFECTING CRITICAL REDUCTION OF FLYING HOUR PROGRAM.

C. ASIDE FROM CITED PROBLEMS, WE ARE MINDFUL OF IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA AND WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS. IMPORTANCE OF VENEZUELAN OIL OBVIOUSLY UNDERSCORES THIS.

2. IN THESE EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S CAREFULLY CONSIDERED ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITY WHICH SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO REQUEST FOR C-5A. WE NOTE REQUEST SEEMS TO EMANATE FROM ONE MINISTER AND MAY NOT REFLECT GOVERNMENT-WIDE HIGH PRIORITY MATTER. IN EVENT YOU CONSIDER FAVORABLE RESPONSE NECESSARY TO CONTINUED GOOD DIPLOMATIC CLIMATE, COULD GOV MAKE AVAILABLE, ON REIMBURSABLE BASIS, JET FUEL TO COVER RETURN FLIGHT TO U.S.? RUSH

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